

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, GE, PL
SUBJECT: PROBLEMS IN VISA-FREE TRAVEL BETWEEN THE GDR
AND POLAND

1. BOTH NEUES DEUTSCHLAND (ND) AND BERLINER ZEITUNG
(BZ) OBSERVE THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF VISA-FREE TRAVEL
BETWEEN THE GDR AND POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA WITH
SIGNED EDITORIALS IN THEIR DECEMBER 29 EDITIONS.
BOTH COMMENTARIES DESCRIBE VISA-FREE TRAVEL AMONG THE
THREE COUNTRIES AS HAVING BECOME A "MATTER OF COURSE".
THEY CITE THIS IMPROVEMENT, DATING FROM JANUARY 1, 1972,
AS AN EXAMPLE OF EACH COUNTRY FORWARD THE DRAWING TOGETHER OF
SOCIALIST NATIONS.

2. THE BZ EDITORIAL DEVIATES FROM THE ND PIECE IN
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ONE IMPORTANT POINT. WHEREAS THE PICTURE FOR ND IS
COMPLETELY ROSY, BZ NOTES THAT IN A PROCESS "OF SUCH
DIMENSIONS," PROBLEMS ARISE, FOR EXAMPLE FROM THE
RESPECTIVE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF EACH COUNTRY. THE BZ
COMMENTARY ASSURES ITS READERS THAT SUCH PROBLEMS WILL

BE SOLVED THROUGH THE CLOSE COOPERATION OF THE PARTIES
AND GOVERNMENTS IN QUESTION.

3. COMMENT: THE BZ COMMENT ON PROBLEMS ARISING FROM
ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IS A CRYPTIC REFERENCE TO RECENT
MEASURES ENACTED BY THE GDR TO TAKE STEPS TO CONTROL
POLISH VISITORS WHO DURING THE PAST YEAR HAVE BOUGHT UP
INCREASING QUANTITIES OF GDR GOODS, PARTICULARLY FOOD-
STUFFS, AS THE POLISH ECONOMIC SITUATION HAS
WORSENER. AS OF EARLY DECEMBER, GDR BORDER FORCES
HAVE BEGUN ENFORCING NEW, STRICT QUOTA REGULATIONS ON A
WIDE RANGE OF GOODS LIMITING HOW MUCH ANY TOURIST CAN
TAKE OUT OF THE GDR. ALTHOUGH THESE NEW REGULATIONS
ARE APPARENTLY BEING APPLIED AT ALL GDR BORDER CROSSING
POINTS, INCLUDING BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BERLIN, THEY
ARE CLEARLY AIMED AT COUNTERING THE DESTABILIZING
EFFECT OF HOARDING POLISH VISITORS. POLANSKY

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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